

JOE WARDY
MAYOR



CITY COUNCIL

SUSAN AUSTIN
DISTRICT NO. 1

ROBERT A. CUSHING, JR.
DISTRICT NO. 2

JOSE ALEXANDRO LOZANO
DISTRICT NO. 3

JOHN F. COOK
DISTRICT NO. 4

DANIEL S. POWER
DISTRICT NO. 5

PAUL J. ESCOBAR
DISTRICT NO. 6

VIVIAN ROJAS
DISTRICT NO. 7

ANTHONY W. COBOS
DISTRICT NO. 8

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
BEL AIR HIGH SCHOOL
MAGNET SCHOOL HEALTH PROFESSIONS AUDITORIUM
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2003
6:00 P.M.**

The City Council met at the above place and date at approximately 6:28 p.m. Mayor Joe Wardy present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Susan Austin, Robert A. Cushing, Jr., Jose Alexandro Lozano, and Anthony W. Cobos. Absent: John F. Cook, Daniel S. Power, Paul J. Escobar, and Vivian Rojas.

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AGENDA

1. Proposed Amendments to the El Paso City Charter.
2. The City Council will retire into EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 - 551.076 to discuss and take action on any of the following: (The items listed below are matters of the sort routinely discussed in Executive Session, but the Council may move to Executive Session any of the items on this agenda, consistent with the terms of the Open Meetings Act.)

Section 551.071	CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY
Section 551.072	DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY
Section 551.073	DELIBERATION REGARDING PROSPECTIVE GIFTS
Section 551.074	PERSONNEL MATTERS
Section 551.076	DELIBERATION REGARDING SECURITY DEVICES

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Due to lack of a quorum at 6:15 p.m., Representative Cobos introduced himself and Representatives Austin, Cushing and Lozano and stated that they would be stepping out of the room and would be coming in to start the meeting once Mayor Wardy arrived. He then introduced Mr. Jim Martinez, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, who would be giving a presentation to the public on the proposed amendments to the El Paso City Charter.

Mr. Jim Martinez, Interim Chief Administrative Officer, gave a Power Point presentation (on file in the City Clerk's Office) that listed and explained the following proposed charter amendments: City Manager form of government, salaries and terms for Council and City administrative functions such as disbursements of City funds and incentive pay. He also explained that the Charter is the local governing document for the City similar to the Constitution.

Mayor Wardy recommended limiting the proposed charter amendments to four and he listed them as follows: City Manager form of government, Council salaries and terms, housekeeping issues such as reimbursements and incentive pay such as pay for employees with new ideas or to reduce injuries workers' compensation. Mayor Wardy stated he was fortunate to be able to run for office without financial worries but that it would be beneficial for future generations to know that they can run and serve their community and still be able to raise a family. He commented that this would encourage the community and the young people to run for office. He gave the example of a seventeen-year-old Eastwood High School student who is very interested in politics and will be talking to him.

Representative Lozano recommended three-year terms rather than the proposed four-year term. He explained that four-year terms are too long for the citizens to have to wait to get someone out of office. He also recommended median pay at \$37,000 rather than the proposed \$41,200 HUD's annual median income for a family of four. He explained that people who run for office do it for the passion to serve the City and not for the money and he is afraid that it eliminates the candidates' passion.

Representative Cobos asked if the Police and Fire Pension solution would require a charter amendment and if it was included in the proposed charter amendments.

Representative Cushing explained that he was been handling this issue as assigned by the Mayor and the solution will not necessarily require charter amendments as they are looking into other avenues.

Representative Cobos expressed his disagreement with increasing the terms to four years due to the commitment. He explained that he is committed to the community and that is the reason why he ran for office but that he also has a family to take care of. He also expressed his agreement with the pay increase.

Representative Austin expressed her agreement with four year staggered terms as they will bring continuity and she commented that the Board of Trustees for the El Paso Community College serve for six years. She recommended that perhaps the salary increase should be over a period of time and not all at once and stated that the salary change will not take effect until the next election cycle.

Mr. Raul Portillo, citizen, questioned Representative Cobos on his commitment to his career or to the City.

Mr. Armando Gomez, City employee, commented that there is no guarantee that increasing the salaries will get more people to run for office and if they do, then they can at least afford it. Mr. Gomez also commented that with election every two years, Council Members could still be removed.

Representative Cushing agreed with the statement that it is the passion that motivates someone to run for office and not the money.

Mr. Martinez, explained the cost of elections and that under staggered terms there still could be election years only for Municipal Court Judges.

Ms. Rosa Morales, City contract employee, expressed her agreement to four-year terms as she used to work for a larger City and the four-year terms worked; Council Members would learn and get acquainted with the system in the first two years and actually work for the community.

Ms. Nancy Stove, citizen, expressed her disagreement to drastic increases in salaries and agreed with Representative Lozano's recommendation in pay. She commented on the proposal regarding incentive pay and stated that the Civil Service Commission Agenda always has the same City employees receiving merit increases.

Mr. Bobby Arcala, citizen, questioned about providing employment opportunities for the disabled.

Mayor Wardy responded that the City is currently working on it and it will not require a charter amendment.

Ms. Elaine Hengen, Assistant City Attorney, confirmed the Mayor's previous statement.

Ms. Bibi Vasquez, City employee, expressed her opposition to four year terms and suggested that instead of incentive pay, why not give the City employees a cost of leaving increase as they are not getting one this year.

Ms. Graciela Olmedo, citizen, requested clarification on filling positions with the City and questioned how the taxpayers will be impacted by the proposed charter amendments. She also spoke in regards to the incentive pay and gave examples of what the company is doing where her husband works.

Mayor Wardy explained the process for filling positions with the City and how the goal is to streamline the process. He gave the example of the Interim Chief Administrative Office position that Mr. Jim Martinez currently holds and how he reports directly to the Mayor and not the City Representatives, the same as the Department Heads. He then proceeded to give examples of other cities that have City Managers.

Ms. Mike Escamilla, City employee, requested clarification on the City Manager and compared it to the CEO of a company and the City Council as the Board of Directors. He then questioned if the City Manager would have the ability to lobby for Council and what the incentive is for the person to perform.

Mayor Wardy responded that the City Manager would not lobby for Council and explained that the incentive to perform is that it is a contract position. He also explained some of the qualifications for the position.

Motion made by Representative Cushing, seconded by Representative Cobos and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting at 7:21 p.m.

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk